Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP, PFOR, EAID, EG

SUBJ: EGYPTIAN REQUEST FOR SUEZ CANAL EQUIPMENT

REF: STATE 121777

- 1. I DISCUSSED WITH SCA CHAIRMAN MASHOUR IN ISMAILIA THE OTHER DAY WHAT RESPONSES HE HAS HAD TO THE VARIOUS ITEMS INCLUDED IN HIS REQUEST (CAIRO A-41). HE WAS SOMEWHAT VAGUE IN HIS RESPONSE, INDICATING SIMPLY THAT HE HOPED VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS WERE LOOKING AT HIS REQUIREMENTS. HE WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN USG REACTION TO HIS REQUEST. I TOLD HIM WE WERE STILL STUDYING THE MATTER.
- 2. I INQUIRED WHAT PRIORITY HIS LIST HAS IN THE OVERALL GOE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES. SPECIFICALLY, I ASKED IF HEGAZI, WHOM PRESIDENT SADAT HAS DESIGNATED TO DETERMINE EGYPTIAN PRIORITIES, HAD EXPRESSED A JUDGMENT ON THE LIST. IT WAS CLEAR FROM MASHOUR'S RESPONSE THAT HE HAD NOT CHECKED HIS REQUIREMENT LIST WITH HEGAZI, THOUGH HE ASSURED ME THAT REOPENING OF THE SUEZ CANAL HAS HIGH PRIORITY. I SUGGESTED THAT HE DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH HEGAZI WITH A VIEW TO HAVING THE LATTER SAY WHAT THE PRIORITIES ARE TO BE VIS-A-VIS OTHER PROJECTS. I POINTED OUT TO HIM THAT ANY USG ASSISTANCE COULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ECONOMIC AID REQUEST WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION HAS MADE OF THE CONGRESS, BUT WHICH HAS NOT YET BEEN ENACTED. MASHOUR SAID HE WOULD UNDERTAKE TO DO SO, BUT I SUSPECT HE PREFERS TO GO HIS OWN WAY.

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 04127 091617Z

3. UNLESS THERE ARE ADDITIONAL FUNDING POSSIBILITIES ABOUT WHICH I DO NOT KNOW, I BELIEVE BEST US RESPONSE WOULD BE TO (A) CONTNUE TO URGE GOE (MASHOUR AND INDEPENDENTLY HEGAZI) TO DETERMINE PRIORITIES OF ITEMS ON THE SCA LIST, BOTH VIS-A-VIS EACH OTHER AND VIS-A-VIS OTHER GOE PROJECTS, AND (B) TO SUGGEST TO MASHOUR THAT GOE EXPLORE WITH IBRD POSSIBILITY OF A COORDINATED MULTINATIONAL APPROACH.

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